

139	Black-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>	R	Fa	G
140	Spotted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	R	Fa	G
	<b>Passeridae</b>				
141	Yellow-throated Sparrow	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	R	Ra	G
142	Blyth's Starling	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	R	C	F
143	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	R	C	I
144	Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	R	C	I
145	Southern Hill-Myna	<i>Gracula indica</i>	R	Fa	F
	<b>Oriolidae</b>				
146	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	M	C	I
	<b>Dicruridae</b>				
147	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	M	C	I
148	Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	R	C	I
149	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	R	C	I
	<b>Artamidae</b>				
150	Ashy Wood swallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	R	Fa	I
	<b>Muscicapidae</b>				
151	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	R	C	I
152	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	R	Fa	I
	<b>Corvidae</b>				
153	Indian Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	R	C	O
154	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	R	Fa	O
155	Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	R	C	O

## Copulatory behavior in Oriental White Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus* Latham, 1790)

R.Roshnath<sup>1</sup>, V. Shruthi<sup>2</sup> and K. Prasoon<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Wildlife Studies, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode

<sup>2</sup>Central University of Kerala.

<sup>3</sup>Mundachalil house, Kannur.

Email: roshnath.r@gmail.com

Oriental White Ibis (hereafter referred as 'OWI') *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Latham, 1790 is a near threatened wetland bird with white body, bare black head and neck with long down-curved black bill. Blood red coloured patches under the wings can be seen during the breeding season (Hancock 1992). OWI is distributed throughout India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar and it is resident bird and migrates to short distance (Ali, 2003). OWI inhabits both freshwater and salt water wetlands such as marshes, lakes, rivers, paddy fields, tidal creeks, mudflats, salt marshes and coastal lagoons. The estimated population is about 15,000-30,000 individuals and it known to be declining rapidly (Annon, 2012). OWI population is threatened due to hunting, habitat degradation, and natural predation (Balakrishnan 2004). Nesting was reported in Kerala during June and July (Narayanan 2006); Ali, 2003 reported the breeding season of this species as November–February. Although ibises are monogamous, during breeding period instances of extra pair copulation are known (Frederick, 1986).

A group twelve OWI was spotted in Munderikadavu, a part of Kattampally wetland, an Important Bird Area (Islam and Rahmani, 2004), on 09 February 2013 at 09:12 hrs. Two OWI, presumed to be male after we saw

the sequence of events that took place, moved close to another individual, presumed to be a female, with their heads swaying up and down. The female was preening itself; one of the males rubbed its long curved beak to that of the female and suddenly mounted on it and the pair hooking their beaks. The second male bird flew away. The male balanced itself on the female's back by spreading wings, the red under wing patch displayed prominently. The male kept its beak locked with female's during whole copulatory period. The male pressed the female to the ground, both spread wings horizontally and after attaining the required position, the female moved her tail laterally exposing her cloaca. The male pressed its cloaca on that of the females, performing the "cloacal kiss". The copulatory session extended for about five minutes and the cloacal kiss was noted six times, each lasting for 4-12 second. It was also noted that more time was taken for the male bird to balance on the female's back than for making the cloacal contact. After one copulation male bird straddled on the female's shoulder and treading (adjusting his position by trampling with his feet) was observed. The neck was extended straight and upwards; blending tails (move tail to one side of female's tail) copulation was seen (6 sec). During the entire session repeated mounting was observed for six times. The male forcefully pressed the female to the ground, restricting its movement with its long legs and grasping its bill. The female was trying to escape and managed to break free after the sixth mounting.

There are different hypotheses proposed for repeated mounting during copulation of birds Johnson (2001) - devaluing the previous male's sperm (Walker, 1980; McKinney *et al.*, 1983), promoting sperm competition (Moller and Birkhead 1989), promoting genetic diversity (Williams 1975) etc.. According to Mc Kinney *et al.*, 1983 forced copulation is common in water fowl.

**Figure-1. Copulatory behaviour of Oriental White Ibis at Munderikadavu**



## References

- Ali, S. (2003). *The Book of Indian Birds* (13<sup>th</sup> Edition), Oxford University Press, Bombay, pp-466.
- Balakrishnan, M and Thomas, S. K. (2004). Conserving the breeding habitat of the near threatened Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanopcephalus*. *Current Science*. 87 (9): 1190-1192.
- Frederick, C.P. (1986). Extra pair copulation in the mating system of White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) Dept. of Biology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C 27514, U.S.A
- Hancock, J.A., Kushlan, J.A. and Kahl, M.P. (1992). *Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills of the World*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Islam, M. Z. and Rahmanai, A. R. (2004) *Important Bird Areas in India: priority sites for conservation*. Indian Bird Conservation Network, Bombay Natural History Society (India) and BirdLife International (UK).
- Johnson, D.D. P. (2001). Models of coexistence, conflict and cooperation. D.Phil.thesis, University of Oxford
- McKinney, F., Derrickson, S. R. and Mineau, P. (1983). Forced copulation in waterfowl. *Behaviour*, 86, 250-294.
- Møller, A. P. and Birkhead, T. R. (1989). Copulation behaviour in mammals: evidence that sperm competition is widespread. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 38, 119-131
- S. Prasanth Narayanan, B. Sreekumar and Vijayan, L (2006). Breeding of the Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* at Kumarakom heronry (Kerala, India) *Indian Birds* Vol. 2 No. 6
- Walker, W. F. (1980). Sperm utilization strategies in nonsocial insects. *American Naturalist*, 115, 780-799.
- Williams, G. C. (1975). *Sex and Evolution*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

## Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops persicus* from Changaram Wetlands

Vaisakh George

vaisakhgeorge@gmail.com

**B**lue-cheeked Bee-eater is a vagrant or a rare passage migrant to south India and was first reported from Goa by Paul Holt (Holt 2009). During autumn, they migrate over the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in north-west India to their wintering destinations in tropical Africa. They are believed to return across the Arabian sea during their spring migration and hence likely to turn up in the west coast of India.

Blue cheeked Bee-eaters [1] were spotted by the members of Birders Club, Ezhupunna including Mr. Sumesh., Mr. Renju, Mr. Abhi, and Mr. Arun during their regular evening birding sessions on 28 April 2014 at Changaram wetlands in Ezhupunna. Later on the photos has been taken by Dr. Manu, Sabu Kinattukara and self and identification confirmed as this species. At the time of writing, about twenty birds are still present and have stayed put for a week now. This is the second record of this species from Kerala – the earlier one being a single from Kole Wetlands on 29 April 2013; i.e. almost the same date as ours last year. (Sreenivasan 2013). Hence, birding during late April/early May in our coasts is likely to produce more sightings of this species during their spring migration.

This finding may call great attention to Changaram wetlands as it is becoming the stepping stone for many rare migratory birds. Many eminent birdwatchers and ornithologists had suggested this place to be a perfect habitat for migratory birds. A month back Spot billed Pelicans, Spotted Redshanks and Common Ringed Plovers were also reported from the same place. It is necessary that the Kerala Forest Department initiate proper conservational measures and raise local awareness about the importance of Changaram wetlands.



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

## References

- Holt, P. I. (2009). A sight record of Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* in Goa. *J. of the Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 105(2): 217-218 (2008)
- Sreenivasan, P.P.(2013). Blue-cheeked Bee-eater from Kole Wetlands, Kerala *Indian BIRDS* 8 (4): 1110.